

**CALIFORNIA WILDLIFE HABITAT RELATIONSHIPS SYSTEM**  
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B415 Plumbeous Vireo *Vireo plumbeus*

Family: Vireonidae Order: Passeriformes Class: Aves

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#### DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

Former solitary vireo was recently divided into plumbeous vireo, Cassin's vireo (*V. cassinii*), and blue-headed vireo (*V. solitarius*) (Murray et al. 1994, Johnson 1995, AOU 1997). An uncommon to fairly common summer resident and migrant in arid pinyon-juniper, lodgepole, and Jeffrey pine east and south of the Sierra Nevada from Alpine County to the Mexican border (Garrett and Dunn 1981, Small 1994, Johnson 1995). A rare but regular winter visitor, mostly on the coast. A small zone of contact with Cassin's vireo was reported in Alpine County (Johnson 1995).

#### SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

**Feeding:** Gleans insects and spiders from foliage and twigs. Sometimes hovers or hawks flying insects. Usually forages in understory and lower canopy of woodlands. Eats some fruits, leaf galls, and seeds (Ehrlich et al. 1988).

**Cover:** *V. plumbeus* frequents arid pinyon-juniper and Jeffrey pine forests and adjacent riparian habitats. Trees and shrubs provide cover.

**Reproduction:** Nests in a low shrub or tree, usually 1.5 to 6.1 m (4-20 ft) above ground. Cup nest is attached at rim to fork of a horizontal branch; typically shaded in dense foliage (Harrison 1978).

**Water:** No information found.

**Pattern:** *V. plumbeus* frequents less dense woodlands of mature pinyon and Jeffrey pine.

#### SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

**Activity Patterns:** Yearlong, diurnal activity. Nocturnal migrant.

**Seasonal Movements/Migration:** Breeders usually arrive in April and depart by mid-September. Wintering individuals occur rarely, but regularly.

**Home Range:** No data found. Haldeman et al. (1973) recorded 5 pairs per 40 ha (100 ac) in a ponderosa pine forest in Arizona. Johnston (1949) recorded 10-20 of the closely related *V. cassinii* per 40 ha (100 ac) in a cut-over Douglas-fir stand in Idaho.

**Territory:** In an Arizona pinyon-juniper-ponderosa pine ecotone, territory averaged 1.7 ha (4.2 ac) (Laudenslayer and Balda 1976).

**Reproduction:** Breeds from mid-April to mid-August with peak activity in May and June. Lays 3-5 eggs, usually 4, which are incubated for about 11-14 days (Harrison

1978).

Niche: Adults, young, and eggs prey of accipiters, jays, small mammals, snakes. A common brown-headed cowbird host (Ehrlich et al. 1988). In the Sierra Nevada, 7 of 8 nests or family groups of the closely related *V. cassinii* contained cowbirds (Rothstein et al. 1980, Verner and Ritter 1983, Airola 1986).

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